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**SACRAMENTO WOMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON IN
IDENTITY THEFT SCHEME**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that ASTONIA R. WICKS, 28, of Sacramento, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge William B. Shubb to 18 months in prison in connection with an identity theft scheme in which she used false identities to obtain credit cards which were used to defraud banks, credit card companies and other businesses of over \$129,000. WICKS was also ordered to serve three years of supervised release after her prison term, and to pay restitution of \$129,167 to the businesses that suffered losses. Under federal law, WICKS will be required to serve at least 85% of the prison time imposed. He was ordered to surrender to begin serving his sentence on July 7, 2004.

This case was investigated by the United States Postal Inspection Service.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner, WICKS admitted in her guilty plea that she had used the identities of numerous other persons to apply for credit through various banks, credit card companies and retail businesses. She used the cards to make purchases of tens of thousands of dollars. ASTONIA WICKS' step mother, PHAEDRA O. WICKS, 43, previously pleaded guilty in the case and was sentenced to five years of probation with conditions including 100 hours of community service, and restitution of \$2,783.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael J. Malecek and W. Douglas Sprague.

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